

My head is
disconnected

- david
Lynch

CURATED BY SARAH PERKS AND OMAR KHOLEIF
FREE EXHIBITION, GROUND FLOOR GALLERY
SAT 6 JUL - SUN 29 SEP 2019

HOME HOME
MCR. ORG

MIF Manchester
International
Festival
2019

TAKE A TRIP INTO THE MIND OF ONE OF CONTEMPORARY CULTURE'S MOST RADICAL AND VISIONARY FIGURES, AS WE HOST THE FIRST MAJOR UK EXHIBITION OF ART BY PIONEERING ARTIST AND FILMMAKER DAVID LYNCH. FEATURING 88 WEIRD AND WONDERFUL WORKS ACROSS FOUR THEMATICALLY CURATED CHAPTERS.

Best known for his dreamlike, surrealist films such as *Eraserhead*, *Blue Velvet*, *Mulholland Drive* and TV show *Twin Peaks*, many of us are already familiar with Lynch's on-screen vision, but in fact he originally trained as a painter, or a visual artist more broadly speaking. Since his early studies at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, he has produced a prolific body of work across painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, drawing, installation, music, and film. In his work, which collectively unfolds the inner workings of everyday life, the mundane provides an opportunity for dark, quirky inner exploration.

Lynch's surfaces, which are scratched, charred and three-dimensional in form, are like windows into the soul. *My Head Is Disconnected* is the first major UK exhibition of visual art by David Lynch, showcasing an accomplished artist oeuvre in a career that has developed over five decades.

The first chapter of the exhibition is titled *City on Fire*, and explores extreme, dystopian landscapes and how they affect the people that inhabit them. *Nothing Here* looks at the human psyche and the fragility of the mind through a set of broad characters. *Industrial Empire* presents drawings on the themes of labour, industry and the environment. The final chapter of the exhibition, *Bedtime Stories*, features new works by Lynch that fold his dark narratives and characters together in their own universe.

Alongside *My Head Is Disconnected*, David Lynch at HOME will also feature specially curated music events, talks and tours and a film programme.

Commissioned and produced by HOME and Manchester International Festival.

ABOUT THE ARTIST DAVID LYNCH

Born in Missoula, Montana, David Lynch now lives and works in Los Angeles. Lynch studied painting at the Boston Museum School and Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts (PAFA). Lynch's five-decade career includes an extensive body of painting, sculpture, photography, printmaking, drawing, installation, music, and film. While studying at PAFA in the late 1960s, Lynch had a vision to make his first 'moving painting': a sculptural painting beneath a moving projection titled *Six Men Getting Sick* (1967). This multimedia work marked Lynch's first foray into filmmaking.

In 2015 Lynch was the subject of a 50-year retrospective at the Queensland Art Gallery in Brisbane, Australia called *Between Two Worlds*. The year before, Lynch was the subject of a major survey exhibition - *The Unified Field* - at Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts. Further important solo exhibitions took place at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris (*The Air is on Fire*, 2007) at the Centre of Contemporary Art, Torun, Poland (*David Lynch: Silence and Dynamism*, 2017) and Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, Netherlands (*David Lynch: Someone is in my House*, 2018).

Lynch is also known as a filmmaker and recording artist who, over the past five decades, has written and directed critically acclaimed films such as *Eraserhead* (1977), *The Elephant Man* (1980), *Dune* (1984), *Blue Velvet* (1986), *Wild at Heart* (1990), *Lost Highway* (1997), *The Straight Story* (1999), *Mulholland Drive* (2001), *Inland Empire* (2006) and the television series *Twin Peaks* (1990-2017).

"There's No place like HOME"

CITY ON FIRE

"Oh my goodness, we're very far away"

Our journey begins by introducing several of the recurring themes in Lynch's work. The foreword - *Deep Dark Darkness* (2009) - is a tale told from the roots underground through trees and houses to where a man with eyes and long arms points us to the stars above.

Large scale paintings *Bob's Second Dream* (2011) and *Boy Lights Fire* (2010) introduce lightbulbs and matches, flickers of flame and electricity that activate the motivations of characters morbidly lost within their environment. A spark can create violence, a primal anxiety of being hurt, naked, burning or the unnatural horror of a gun. The colour palette is dirty earth tones or black and white; the landscapes are largely empty save for bare trees and sky.

This is a place where dreams give way to nightmares.

Painting itself is at the beginning and end of a perpetual narrative cycle for Lynch. It is a form he literally returns to again and again throughout his career, the self-contained world they present is the ideal display mechanism for his explorations and concerns. It is a medium of layers and textures, both still and moving at the same time. The paintings feel capable of hiding secrets underneath, a visceral appearance that somehow connects us directly to the *Spiral* (2012) of fear that pervades the contemporary world.



Nothing Here

"You got to change that blue"

Are we trapped by the mind as much as the environment around us? To look inside the head is perhaps the scariest place of all, with nowhere to hide (*My Shadow is With Me Always*, 2008-2009) and the pressure to conform looming large (*Oh, I Have Made a Mess*, 2009, *Oh... I Said a Bad Thing*, 2009). Lynch does not provide his artwork with psychoanalytical, theoretical or literal explanations; in order to find your own interpretation, you have to go deep inside and seek out its severed spirit.

Lynch has a collection of characters that reappear across his creative oeuvre, simple names for a complex world. Are they random manifestations of the same subconscious or a more ordered attempt to rationalize the irrational imagination? *Untitled* (Drawing from a "Ricky Board", c1987-1988) is a drawing of twenty identical dead flies each given a separate name, the idea is how different they appear from just a name, or crucially, how diversely people view the same thing. The importance of this work should not be underestimated and is perhaps the closest thing to a guide or a key to unlock everything. Lynch also invites you to make your own board, just observe the rules of this poem:

'Four rows of five, Your rickies come alive, Twenty is plenty, It isn't tricky, Just name each ricky, Even though they're all the same, The change comes from the name.'

My
head



is

dis



in-
tended

INDUSTRIAL EMPIRE

"I love seeing people come out of the darkness"

This chapter includes the *Matchbook* series (all 27 drawings) from the early 1970s, made by Lynch at a time when he had few resources and was working towards his first feature film. The tiny sketched vistas appear almost Mancunian: rainy and windswept, etching of past or future landscapes on matchbooks, an industrial revolution era invention (patented in 1894); small and throwaway but with the power to destroy a whole forest.

There is a sense of humorous irony in these drawings and paintings that deal with machines and industry, illustrated across works such as *Truck Carries Log* (2013) to *Man and Machine* (2009). The chapter embraces a certain type of Americana nostalgia, the seemingly innocuous idea of progress and the American dream. The warnings are there though, Lynch's signature darkness implies there will be side effects to interventions by human technology, embodied by the punishing horror of *Mister Redman* (2000).

This chapter is followed by an Interlude, a collection of Lynch's expressive lamp light sculptures.



Bedtime Stories

“Sometimes the story comes first and sometimes it comes a little bit later”

This chapter presents new work about the adventures of Billy, Sally, Bob, Ricky and friends. They are pictured in suburban scenarios with animals, in houses, as children, having a picnic, with dark shadows and their brains being eaten. The domesticity of house and home holds little safety, by now we know this world can barely conceal its bloody underbelly. A plane, a car, a hanging, a lost slipper, Mr. Bee-man, a picket fence, a woman abducted... whose stories are these? Where am I and what time is it? *Who Is Outside My House My Dog Is Running Away. They Come in Thru My T.V. Where Is My Dog* (2018).

Lynch is a visual artist, an auteur, creating dream-like fictions across multiple media that compress our collective fear of loss, violence and pain. His micro narratives and motifs mature across this latest body of work, with storytelling that incorporates a flash of the autobiographical - the house in *Philadelphia* is the one he owned there in the late 1960s.

At the last chapter of this exhibition, the narrative is poised to be continued following its own logic and lucidity: if you follow the darkness, it whispers, you might just find the light.

BILLY (and his friends) Did
find SALLY in the tree



CREDITS

David Lynch: My Head Is Disconnected and *David Lynch at HOME* are curated by Professor Sarah Perks and Dr Omar Kholeif with special input from Mary Anne Hobbs and Jason Wood for the music and film programmes.

Manchester International Festival

John McGrath, Artistic Director & Chief Executive; Fiona Gasper, Executive Producer; Kwong Lee, Producer; Katie Popperwell, Programmer and Producer.

HOME

Dave Moutrey, Director; Jon Gilchrist, Executive Director; Jason Wood, Creative Director: Film and Culture; Bren O'Callaghan, Curator; Alice Wilde, Talent Development Producer; Jamie Allan, Programme Assistant; Helen Hall, Production Manager; Sean Pritchard: Technical Director.

Studio Lynch

Michael T. Barile, Assistant to David Lynch; Anna Skarbek, Collection Manager; Sabrina Sutherland, Producer.

Kayne Griffin Corcoran, Los Angeles

Genevieve Day, Senior Director; Britte Geijer, Executive Associate.

Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht

Stijn Huijts, Artistic Director; Jacobien Peeters, Head of Presentations; José Curfs, Exhibitions Registrar.

Galerie Karl Pfefferle, Munich

Dr. Zuzana Kunzl, Associate; Karl Pfefferle; Bernadette Martial-Pfefferle.

Lenders

Sarah Agudo; Marcus Andrade; Beth Rudin DeWoody; Maggie Kayne; Saree Kayne; Christine and Oliver Mones; Mayeul Placès; Paul DeSandre and Michael Ross; Hayden Slater; Private Lenders.

Additional thanks

AL and AL; Chrysta Bell; Dr Amy C Chambers; Tim Burgess; Klein Editions; Dr Kirsty Fairclough; Patrice Forest, Item Éditions; Maggie Hoffgen; David Hughes; Caroline Klapp; Breb Millar; Deirdre Parsons, Executive Director, David Lynch Foundation UK; Andy Willis.

The chapter quotes are from David Lynch's *Catching the Big Fish: Meditation, Consciousness and Creativity* (2007). The Ricky Board invitation is from *Do It! The Compendium* by Hans Ulrich Obrist, 2012.

ABOUT THE CURATORS

Omar Kholeif

Omar Kholeif is a writer, curator and editor. He currently holds the post of Director of Collections and Senior Curator at the Sharjah Art Foundation. Over the last decade, he has curated more than 100 exhibitions, special projects and commissions globally. He has authored and/or edited more than twenty books and catalogues on art, including recent publications *Goodbye, World! Looking at Art in the Digital Age* (Sternberg Press, 2018) and *The Artists Who Will Change the World* (Thames and Hudson, 2018).

Sarah Perks

Sarah Perks is an international curator and writer who works across contemporary visual art, film and literature to create major exhibitions, books and films that challenge the dominant narratives of our time. Recent exhibitions include solo presentations of Phil Collins *Can't Do Right for Doing Wrong* (2018) and Noor Afshan Mirza and Brad Butler *The Scar* (2018). Perks was Executive Producer on *Island of the Hungry Ghosts* (Gabrielle Brady, 2018) which has won over ten awards internationally, including Tribeca Film Festival Best Documentary winner. Sarah is Professor of Visual Art at Manchester School of Art, Manchester Metropolitan University.

Manchester International Festival

David Lynch at HOME is part of Manchester International Festival 2019. Every two years, MIF brings together leading artists from different art forms and backgrounds for 18 extraordinary days of world premieres and special events at venues all over the city. For more on MIF, [visit mif.co.uk](http://mif.co.uk).

Manchester International Festival is supported by:

OFFICIAL PARTNERS

bruntwood



PUBLIC SECTOR FUNDERS



MEDIA PARTNERS



DAVID LYNCH AT HOME

To coincide with *My Head Is Disconnected*, David Lynch has also taken over the rest of the HOME building for a whole summer of film, music and events including:

- **David Lynch Presents music nights, Fri 12 – Sun 14 Jul**
- **It's a Great Big Wonderful World: David Lynch Film Season, Sat 6 Jul – Sun 29 Sep**
- **David Lynch's True Favourites Film Season, Fri 13 – Sun 29 Sep**

For the full programme, including events, see homemcr.org/david-lynch

The events that David Lynch participates in are co-productions with Manchester International Festival, HOME and the David Lynch Foundation UK (davidlynchfoundation.org.uk), and in partnership with Lifeshare, a voluntary organisation established to help meet the needs of homeless and vulnerable people in Manchester and Salford (lifeshare.org.uk).

MERCHANDISE

After visiting the exhibition, don't forget to drop into the HOME Shop for some exclusive David Lynch merchandise, from pin badges and postcards, coffee mugs, exhibition blend coffee, fridge magnets, organic cotton t-shirts and totes, plus related books, films and soundtracks.

GALLERY TOURS

Join our curators for a free tour of our major new solo exhibition by pioneering film director and artist David Lynch. Just register your place with our box office.

Fri 12 Jul 2019, 18.00 – 18.45

Tue 30 Jul 2019, 18.00 – 18.45

Fri 16 Aug 2019, 18.00 – 18.45

Sat 24 Aug 2019, 16.00 – 16.45

Fri 13 Sep 2019, 18.00 – 18.45

Sat 28 Sep 2019, 14.00 – 14.45

Interested in booking a group tour?

If you are interested in booking a tour for a community, school or college group please contact engagement@homemcr.org or if you are a business and would like to book a private tour please contact development@homemcr.org to find out more.

HELP KEEP OUR GALLERIES FREE

We are proud to say that our galleries and exhibitions are open to all and free of charge. However, as a registered charity, we rely on the generosity of supporters to help us to bring exhibitions like this to HOME, to share them with the widest possible audience and to keep admission free.

If you enjoy today's exhibition, please consider a donation to help us raise the £650,000 we need each year to remain open and accessible to all.

Every gift, no matter the size, helps to make a difference and your support will be hugely appreciated.

Please ask one of our Gallery Invigilators how to donate by contactless or where to find our donation box or visit [homemcr.org/donate](https://www.homemcr.org/donate) to give online.

SUSTAINABILITY

HOME is committed to the 100% reuse and redistribution of all exhibition materials, with all build elements being repurposed. HOME maintains a zero-to-landfill policy and we are committed to Greater Manchester's goal of becoming a carbon neutral city region by 2038.

Visit [homemcr.org/green](https://www.homemcr.org/green) for more information.

ACCESS

Should you have any access requirements or suggestions of how we can improve your experience, please speak to a member of gallery staff or email access@homemcr.org.

Visit [homemcr.org/access](https://www.homemcr.org/access) for information on our facilities and access programme.



Photograph by Josh Telles

homemcr.org
mif.co.uk.

 **If you don't want to keep me, please return to an invigilator or recycle me!** 

FOR VENUE, EVENT INFORMATION AND BOOKING **homemcr.org** BOX OFFICE **0161 200 1500**
BE THE FIRST TO RECEIVE UPDATES **homemcr.org/members** KEEP IN TOUCH e-news **homemcr.org/sign-up**
 @HOME_mcr  HOMEEmcr  HOMEEmcr  HOMEEmcr  HOMEEmcr  HOMEEmcr  HOMEEmcrorg

.....
FUNDED BY



.....
FOUNDING SUPPORTERS



.....
HOME is a trading name of Greater Manchester Arts Centre Ltd a company limited by guarantee. Registered in England and Wales No: 1681278.
Registered office 2 Tony Wilson Place, Manchester, M15 4FN. Charity No: 514719 © 2019